H. FILE SUBMISSION, UPLOADING THE REPORT AND ERROR MESSAGES

File Submission

When all transactions have been entered for a report, and the deadline for reporting is imminent, the final details must be collected in order to file electronically. There are several different ways a user may file, and with detailed information following.

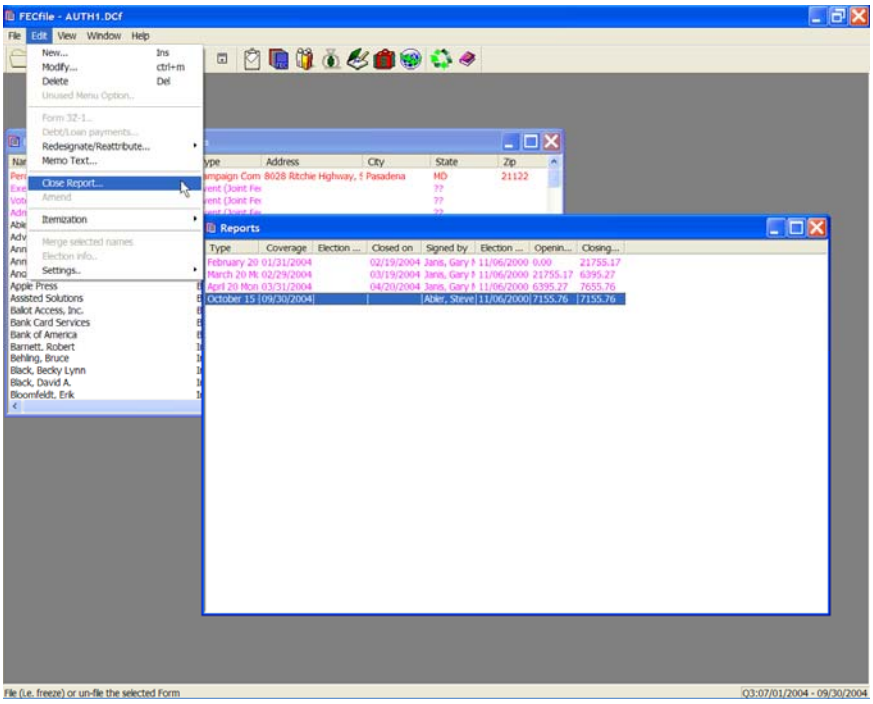
Filing Requirements

- ✓ **The user must have an FEC electronic filing password.** This is REQUIRED. They must contact the FEC electronic filing office if they do not have a password, or if it has been forgotten.

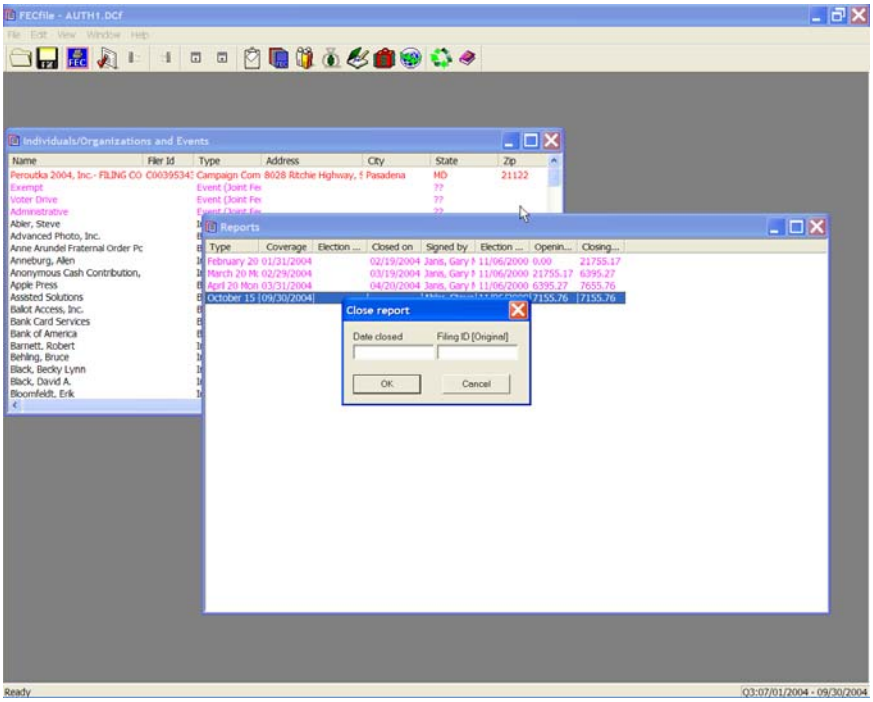
The user must have a modem and phone line connection for dial up, or a network connection to the Internet. (When no other option is available, filing on diskette is an option). The report must pass validation.

Signing and Dating the Report

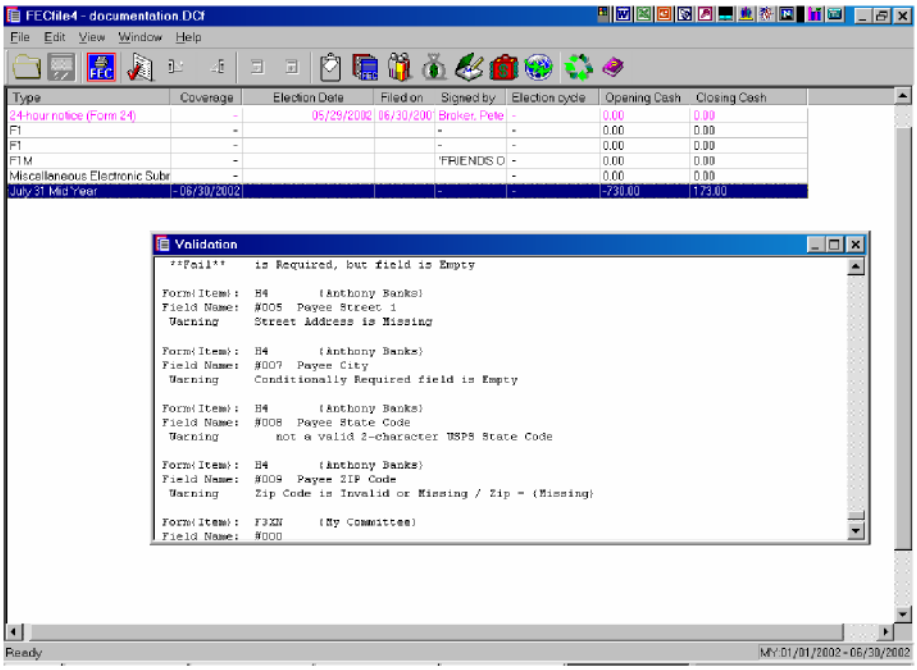
If the report is not properly signed and dated, the validator will note that the information is missing and generate Level 12 (serious level) errors, and uploading will not be possible. If the report is not ready to actually upload, but want to validate it, the user may want to leave the report date blank.



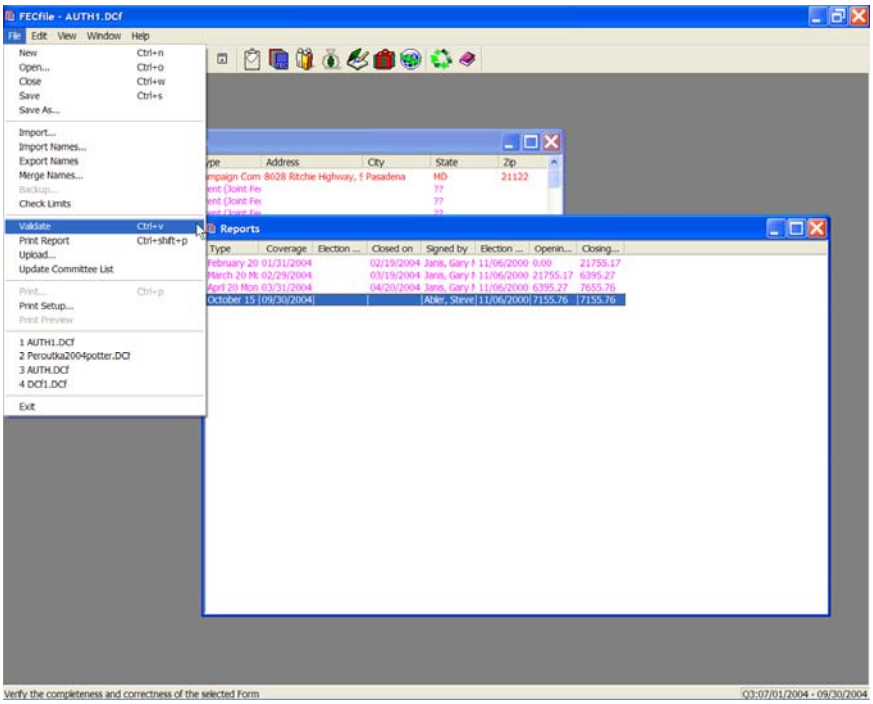
✓ To sign the report, double click on the report type in the Reports Window. This will open the report information window. The Treasurer must be selected in the 'Signed by" field. Date the report, select **Close Report** from the edit menu or right click on the report to close in the **Reports window.** This can only be done with the Reports View active.



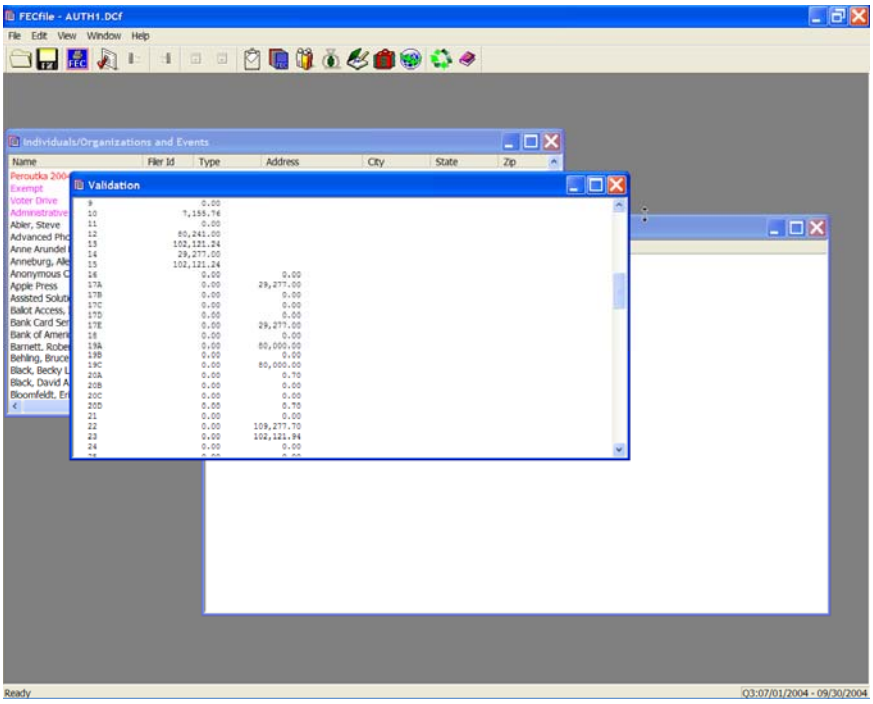
- ✓ Enter the actual date the report will be filed in the **Date closed** field. The **Time field** will be automatically populated.
- ✓ The **Filing ID** is only used for amendments, and should be blank for new reports. For amended reports, the filing number of the report being amended should already be displayed.



Validation

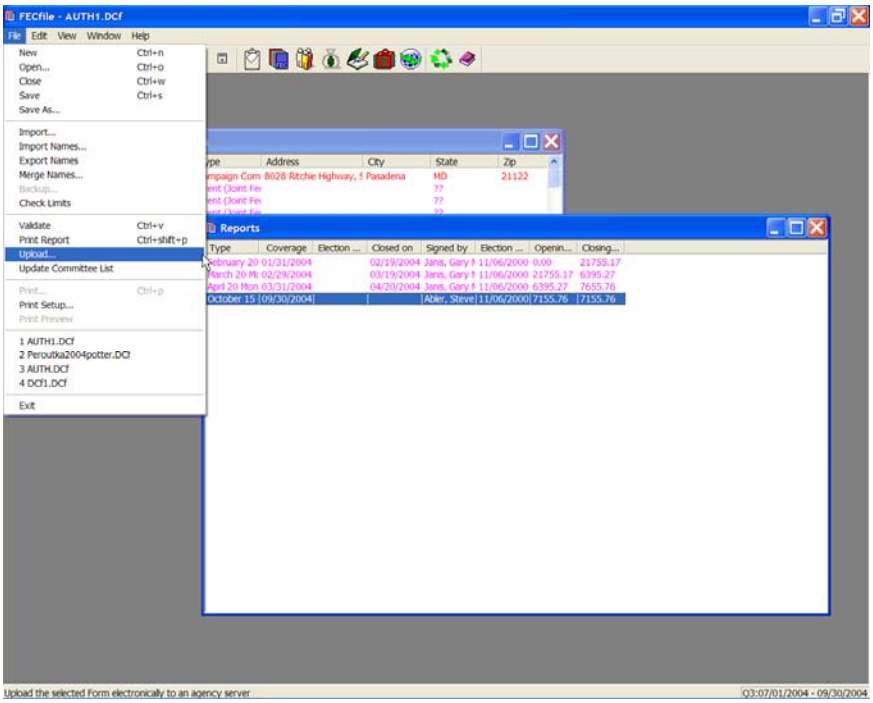


The validation process identifies errors and omissions in the report. It does not evaluate the filing for correct reporting practices, but sends an alert for missing information, such as employers and occupations, or failure to designate a signatory for the report.



- ✓ To validate the report, select **validate** from the File menu or click on the **Validator** button on the toolbar. Once the errors reported by the **Validator** have been resolved, the application is prepared to close and upload the report.

Uploading the Report Via TCP/IP/Internet

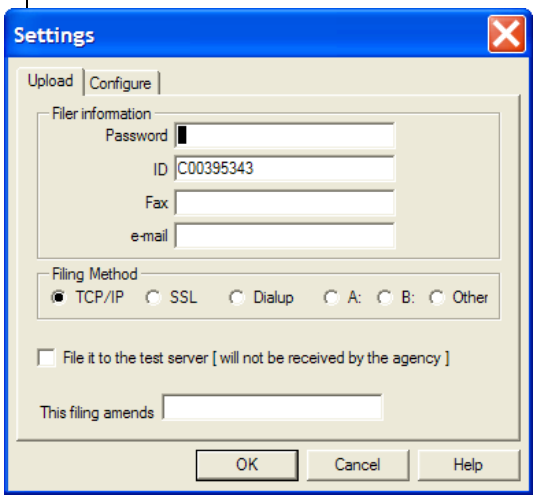


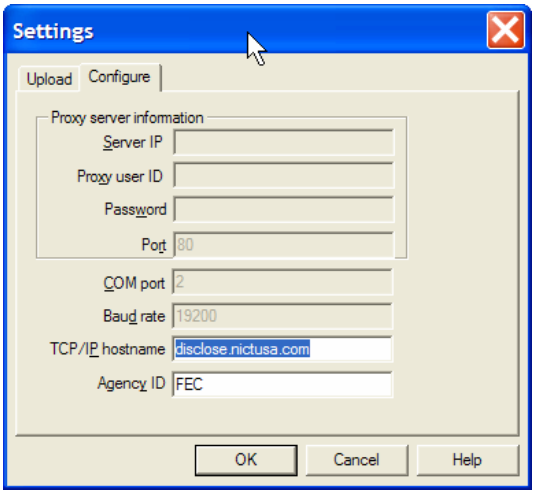
To begin the upload process:

- ✓ Choose Upload from the File menu, or click on the Upload button on the tool bar.
    - The upload process automatically runs the validator.
    - If errors are found that are level 8 or higher, the user will not be allowed to upload the report.
    - If errors are found that are below level 8, a warning message appears on the screen that notifies the user of the errors and asks if the user wishes to continue. It is advisable to correct as many of the errors as possible before filing.
    -

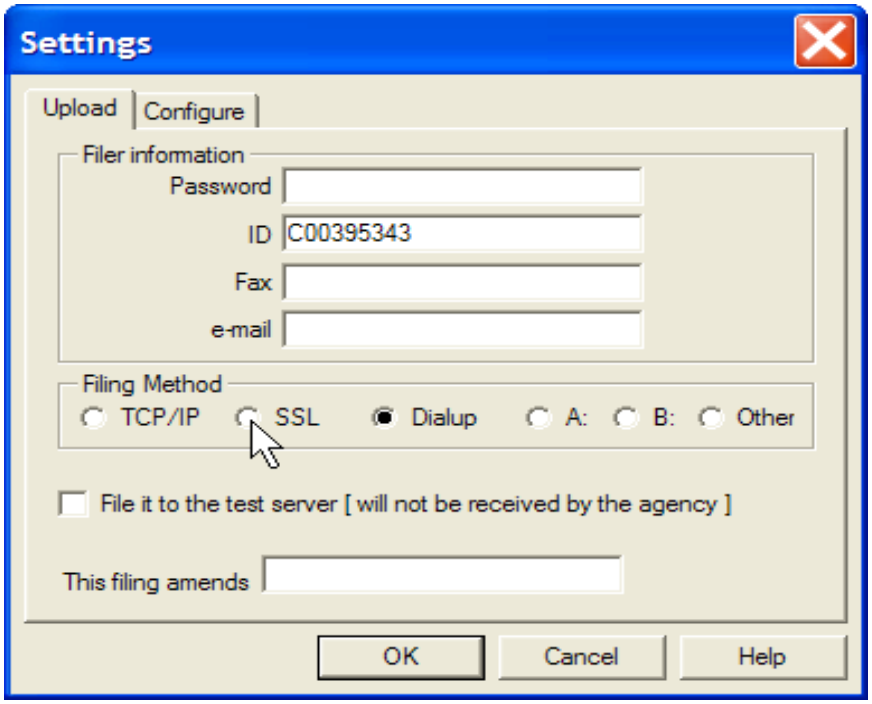
If no errors are found, or the user indicates that they wish to file the report with errors, the Upload Settings screen appears.

- ✓ The Password is required and must be obtained from the FEC electronic filing office.
- ✓ The ID is the committee ID which should be reflected, based upon the Lookup file installed. However, if not, enter the digit committee ID (starting with “C00”).
- ✓ A Fax number and/or Email address is required. This will permit the user to receive confirmation that the report has been received by the FEC. If the user enters both, they will receive both a fax and an email. The TCP/IP option sends the report to the Commission via the Internet. This is the simplest way to send the report if connected to the Internet and no security measures are in place that would prevent the user from uploading via the Internet. The configure tab has information the software uses to communicate with the FEC electronic filing system. The **TCP/IP** host name should be **disclose.nictusa.com** (all lower case), and the Agency ID should be **FEC** (all upper case). The software defaults to these settings. If settings are changed, they must be reset to the defaults in order to upload the report properly.

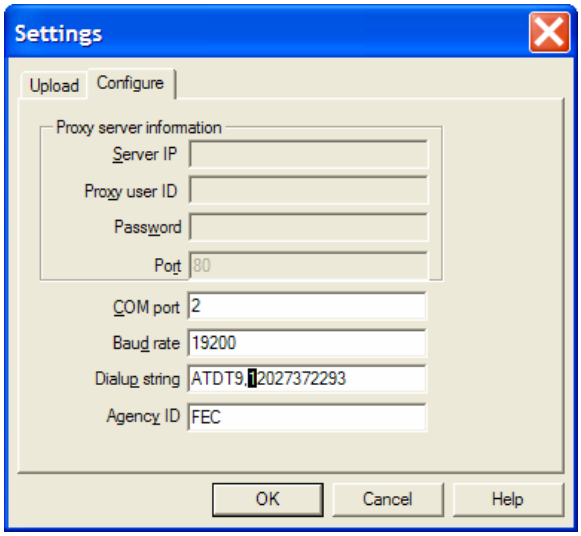




Dialup Option

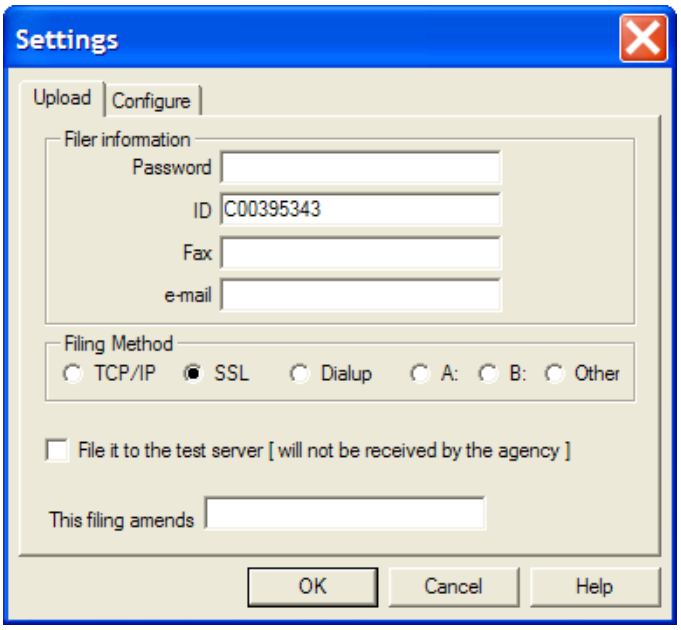


The Dialup option utilizes a direct modem-to-modem communication between the users computer and the FEC electronic filing system. It is slightly less convenient than TCP/IP because it requires some special information on the configuration tab that may not be readily available, as seen below. This option can be used for filers who have no Internet connection or those who have special firewall or proxy server restrictions against uploading files via the Internet.



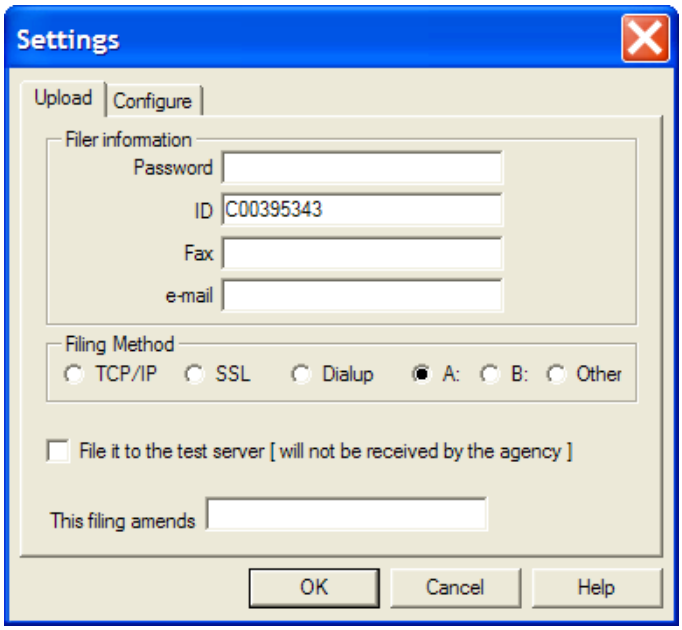
NOTE: The Dialup string shown includes a “9,” in the setup string. If you are dialing from a location that requires a nine or other access number to obtain an outside line, you must include it at the start of the dialup string. The comma provides for a pause to allow the system to obtain dial tone. If you do not have to dial a special access code from the line you use to dial up, you can omit the “9,”

SSL



This option also sends the user's report to the Commission via the Internet. The SSL option allows users that are behind a firewall or proxy server to file their report securely. They may need assistance from their network administrator in order to use this option. The configure tab has information the software uses to communicate with the FEC electronic filing system. The https host name should be https://webforms.nictusa.com/cgi-bin/disclose_ssl/upload (all lower case), and the *Agency ID* should be FEC (all upper case). The software defaults to these settings. If they are changed, they must be reset to the defaults in order to upload the report. The user's Network administrator can supply them the proxy server information.

Diskette (A: or B:)



If, for whatever reason, the Internet or a phone line is not available, the report may be submitted on diskette. The filing must be submitted on a single 3.5" 1.44MB diskette and may contain only one report and no other files; the only exception to this is, (on the same diskette), a second file containing a digitized copy of the signed summary page**.** PLEASE READ the following instructions and NOTES completely before you begin:

1. Insert a blank diskette 3.5". 1.44 MB diskette in the diskette drive and from the "Settings" screen select option A: or B: from the "Filing Method", whichever corresponds to the floppy disk drive of the computer. If the diskette is not blank, the upload of the file will fail.

2. Select "OK".

- The report will now be uploaded to the diskette. Check your diskette to verify that the file on the diskette has a **".fec"** file extension. Any other format will be rejected (**including .dcf**)
- Be sure to label your diskette with:
  - Your email address (so a filing receipt can be sent to you)
  - Your committee ID number (C00123456)
  - Your report type (Year-End 2004)
- The Diskette must be mailed along mailed along with a **signed** paper hard copy of the report signature page (report cover page),

(page 1 of the report, not the complete report), to the FEC. Diskette filings require an actual Report Cover page and signature, as there is no way to transmit the password via diskette. The mailing address is:

Electronic Filing Office
Federal Election Commission
999 E Street, NW
Washington, DC 20463

NOTE: Diskette filings are subject to the same deadlines as paper filings! Diskette filings mailed to the FEC without a signed report cover page will be rejected! The printed Report Cover Page MUST be exactly the same as the one in the filing (i.e., printed from the submitted filing and signed) Each diskette may contain only one report and may contain no other files. The only exception to this rule, is a second file containing a digitized copy of the signed summary page. Outside of that scenario, each diskette should contain only one file, to be successfully accepted.

Please include with your diskette your email address or fax number so that you will receive a filing confirmation receipt.

Other

The other option allows the user to specify a specific directory on their computer to create a copy of the report by entering in the complete path and file name with '.fec' as the extension in the 'disk file' field of configuration section of the upload utility.

Additional Upload Instructions, Settings and Features

Filing to a Test Server

Test reports can be filed using **Dialup, TCP/IP or SSL.** The test-filing server is a duplicate of the actual server. The purpose of test filing is to verify that the user can use the chosen method to file the actual report.

TEST FILING WILL SIMULATE THE LIVE FILING ENVIRONMENT. FILING A TEST REPORT IS FOR DIAGNOSTIC PURPOSES ONLY. TEST FILING OF REPORTS WILL NOT FULFILL THE FILING REQUIREMENTS IN ANY CASE. THE FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION WILL NOT SEE REPORTS FILED TO THE TEST SERVER. THE TEST REPORT WILL EVENTUALLY BE DELETED FROM THE TEST SERVER.

Additional information about filing test reports is available from technical support.

Proxy Server information

Allows the user to configure FECload to file reports through a proxy server. The user's network administrator can supply the *server id, proxy user id, and password.*

COM Port

The *Com port* setting defaults to port 2. This is the most common port used by modems. If the user's modem does not use com port 2, they may change it to the correct com port.

Baud Rate

The default *Baud rate* is 1 200. This is an indication of the speed with which the modem transfers data. It can be set to match the connection speed but not set higher.

Dialup String

The *Dialup string* is a series of letters followed by a phone number. This information is passed to the user's modem to enable it to connect with the FEC modem pool.

Agency ID

This information is used to direct the filing to the proper part of the electronic filing system. The default entry is FEC. There is no need to edit this entry.

During The Filing Process

When OK is selected, the file is uploaded to the FEC electronic filing server. On the screen a series of messages appears detailing what is occurring. If at any point during the process, something is found to be incorrect, the process will be terminated and the word *FAILED* will appear at the bottom of the screen.

The most common failures are:

- incorrect passwords (The password *IS* case sensitive) and
- uploading without first connecting to the Internet (TCP/IP only). If the
- upload process generates a *FAILED* message at any point, call Tech
- Support.

If the password is correct, and there are no other reasons to reject the file (the Validator usually eliminates most other problems), the last line of the message is Succeeded. At this point the user is notified that the file has been received by the FEC.

<u>This does not mean that the file has been</u>

accepted!

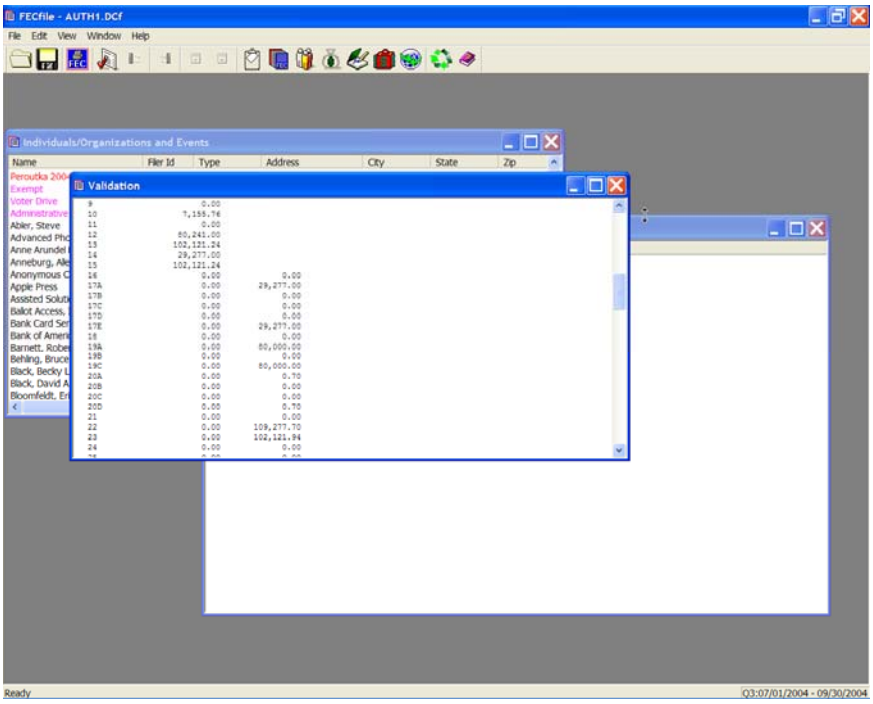
If the file is accepted, the user receives a fax or email within a few minutes notifying them that the filing was accepted. If they do not receive this notification, they should call the electronic filing office immediately.

When the user receives notification they will recognize it as the same printout that the validator provided. It should in fact be nearly identical. The MD5 Checksum number should match exactly.

Example:

The only difference between this notification and the one printed from the validator is the addition of a block of information about filing date and time and a Filing ID number. This number is assigned when the report is received and it is important. If it is found that the report must be amended, the user must provide the Filing ID of the original report. The Filing Id is automatically saved inside the user's file, after they upload. They may look up the Filing Id by activating the Reports View, Selecting Edit, and clicking Unclose Report. There is a field that will hold the Filing Id of the report.

NOTE: The Faxed or emailed receipt is the official receipt and should be kept just as the user would keep a certified mail receipt. This is proof that they filed the report.



Interpreting Validation Error Codes/Description Of The Validator Program

A committee will receive two types of validation error codes when mistakes are made or omissions are present in the report, Warning and Fail.

- The Fail message will not allow the committee to file the report, automatically until the errors are corrected.
- The Warning message will only cause a report to fail if the committee has 10,000 errors, or more.
-

The Fail indicator will look like the following in the Validator printout:

1. Form{Item}: SB23

Field Name: #002 FEC Committee ID Number
Fail is Required, but the field is Empty

Form{Item}: identifies the schedule and line on which the Fail entry occurs. In this case the error occurs on Schedule B supporting Line 23 of the Summary Page.

Field Name: identifies the aspect of the transaction that is in error.

****Fail** identifies the failure. In this example the committee's identification number was not supplied.**

The Warning indicator will look like the following in the Validator printout:

1. Form{Item}: SA11A1
   {Smith^John^^} Field
   Name: #00 Contributor
   ZIP Code

Warning Zip Code is Invalid or Missing / Zip = {Missing}

Form{Item}: identifies the schedule and line on which the Warning entry occurs. In this case the error occurs on Schedule A supporting Line 11(a) of the Summary Page.

Field Name: identifies the aspect of the transaction that is in error.

Warning: identifies the warning. In this example the zip code is

missing.

Other Errors

"FEC Committee ID Number Is Required, But Field Is Empty" Error

When a committee finishes their report, they must run the Validator program. Committees may then receive the following error message: **"FEC Committee ID Number is required, but field is empty."** This will prevent the committee from

uploading its report. The problem can be fixed by the following steps:

- Instruct the committee to open FECFile (but not any particular report), click View and highlight Individuals/Organizations.
- Double-click on the entry that displays its own committee (this entry will appear in red).
- Instruct the committee to input their FEC identification number directly under FEC ID and click OK.
- This will correct the error message listed above and allow the committee to file their report, assuming no other serious problems exist in the report.

Validator Warning and Fail Messages Defined

Fail Messages

2. HDR record must be First in File – Usually means that the file is not in the proper format. Often it is a version 2 file being validated with a version 3 Validator. It is usually a private vendor's software, not an FECFile problem.

3. "Cover" (eg. F3A, F3XN, ...) must be 2nd in File -- Usually means that the file is not in the proper format. Often it is a version 2 file being validated with a version 3 Validator. It is usually a private vendor's software, not a FECFile problem.

4. Filing must be an "FEC" Type of filing -- Indicates the user is submitting a report that is not in the ".fec" format.

5. Filing must be in "FEC Version 4.0" Format -- Indicates the user is using an old version of FECFile. The Committee will need to download a copy of the latest version of the software from the FEC's web page (http://www.fec.gov/elecfil/electron.html).

6. Amended filing must have an ID of the "Original" -- An amended report is given a code once filed at the FEC. In order to amend the report the Committee must use this number. It can be found on the Raw Data Page (http://herndon2.sdrdc.com/cgibin/dcdev/) and should be entered in the following format: FEC-12345.

7. Amended filing must have an "Amended Number" -- Each amendment is numbered beginning with 1. If the same report is amended a second time, the amended number is 2. etc.

8. Header (HDR) inconsistent with Orig/Amend status -- The Header indicates that the file has been amended but the form name of the report (F3N, F3A, F3XN, F3XA etc) does not.

9. Unrecognized form Type/ Record Ignored -- The first field in a transaction indicates form type (F3X, SA11AI, SB17, etc.). This message indicates the use of an improper form type.

10. ID #_____Not correct FEC Format -- Indicates that the Committee is using a number that is not in the FEC ID format (C00XXXXX).

11. ID #_____Not same as Cover Page ID # -- Each transaction carries the committee ID and it must match the committee ID at the beginning of the report.

12. Schedule does not belong with Form _____ -- Indicates the user is attempting to file an invalid schedule with a particular form.

13. Report Type is Missing or Invalid -- Indicates the user has either failed to enter the report type or is using a report type inconsistent with FEC report types.

14. {field} exceeds maximum length of _____ -- Indicates the user has exceeded the maximum number of characters in a particular field.

15. {field} is Required, but field is Empty -- Indicates the user has failed to enter information in a particular field.

16. Multi-Form Filings are NOT Allowed -- Each filing must consist of a single form (Form 3X, Form 1, Form 6, etc...). The files cannot be bundled into one filing.

17. Extraneous data follows last field -- Indicates a technical problem usually involving invalid characters. Only characters between ascii 22 and ascii 126 are acceptable.

18. Schedule H3(s) not Version 2.02 Format -- Indicates the user is attempting to file an invalid schedule with a particular form.

19. Embedded double-quotes (“) not allowed -- Double quotes are used as part of the delimiter system. A comma-delimited file can be delimited by commas or by quotes and commas. Therefore, if you use “Dr.”,”John Smith”,”Jr”, there is no problem. If “Dr.”,”John “Big Boy” Smith”,”Jr,” is used, the quotes around “Big Boy” will confuse the system.

20. Leading Blanks {e.g. “Text”} not allowed -- Data cannot begin with blanks. For example, [,123 White Street,] is OK, [, 123 White Street,] is not.

21. Bad Date _____not YYYYMMDD format -- Indicates the user has enter the date in an improper format.

22. Not a Real Date or Outside 1960-2099 -- Indicates that the user has entered an invalid date or a date that does not fall between 1 60 and 20 .

23. Invalid Amount format:_____ -- Indicates the amount is something other than numbers and decimals. Dollar signs and commas are not allowed.

24. Non-numeric data in Numeric Field -- Indicates characters that are other than numbers entered into a field that should contain only numbers.

25. _____s an Invalid Year (CCYY) Format -- Indicates the user has entered the year in an incorrect format.

26. District "___" is not 2-digit Numeric format -- Indicates the user has failed to enter the Congressional District as two digits.

27. Tran ID is NOT UNIQUE - This one is same as other(s) -- Each transaction in an electronic filing (and all of its amendments) must have a unique transaction id.

28. Event MUST be identified as [D]irect or [E]xempt -- Indicates the user has failed to specify an event as D (Direct Candidate Support) or E (Exempt).

31. Event MUST be [A]dministrative [D]irect or [E]xempt -- Indicates the user has failed to specify an event as A (Administrative/Voter Drive), D (Direct Candidate Support) or E (Exempt).

29. Invalid FEC CSV Version # -- Indicates the user has used an old version of the filing software.

Warning Messages

1. Conditionally Required field is empty – Indicates the user has failed to enter data in a particular field.

2. Subtotal {_____} not supported by other lines – Summary amount should be the total of other lines on the summary, but is not (total contributions do not match all the contribution lines added together).

3. Subtotal {_____} not support by Schedule ____ -- Summary Page amount does not match the associated schedule amount.

4. FYI → {_____} accumulated on Schedule ___ -- If warning number 3 appears, this error is provided for the user's information.

5. Election Code invalid: ___ {description} -- Indicates that the user has failed to adequately indicate an election (primary, general, special or runoff) towards which a contribution was made.

6. Election Code missing: ___ {description} – Indicates that the user has failed to indicate an election (primary, general, special or runoff) towards which a contribution was made.

7. Street Address is Missing – Indicates the street address for a particular entry is missing.

8. Single-line Address NOT in 1st delimited field – Indicates that the user has entered a one-line address in the second address field.

9. ___ not a valid 2-character USPS State Code -- Indicates that the user has failed to enter the two digit state code.

10. Zip Code is invalid or Missing / Zip =_____ -- Indicates the user has failed to supply the zip code or has supplied too few or too many digits.

11. Invalid Area Code/Phone Number _____ -- Indicates the user has entered a phone number containing too few or too many numbers.

12. Office Code "___" Invalid (Valid Codes: H, S, P) – Indicates that the user has entered an office code that does not fit the format of H (House), S (Senate), or P (President).

13. Comm Code "___" Invalid. (Valid: DM, TP, TM, O) – Indicates that a Form 7 (Report of Communication Costs) does not disclose the code for the type of communication in the category of DM (Direct Mail), TP (Telephone), TM (Telegram), or O (Other).

14. Comm Target "___" Invalid. (Valid: E, S, M) -- Indicates that a Form 7 (Report of Communication Costs) does not disclose the correct code for the class of recipient, in the category of E (Executive/Administrative Personnel), S (Stockholders), or M (Members).

15. Ratio Code "___" Invalid (Valid Codes: N, R, S) – Indicates that the user has entered a ratio code that does not fit the format N (New), R (Revised), or S (Same).

16. Sup/Opp Code "___" Invalid (Valid Codes: S, O) -- Indicates that the user has entered a code that does not fit the format of S (Support) or O (Oppose) on Schedule E.

17. Committee Type "___" is Invalid for this Form – Indicates that the user has entered an invalid committee type on Form 1.

18. ___ not a valid 3-character Party Code – Indicates that the user has entered a code on Form 1 that does not correspond to a recognized political party.

19. ___ not a valid Party Type (NAT, STA, SUB) – Indicates that the user has entered a code on Form 1 that does not fit the party type and format of NAT (National), STA (State), or SUB (Local).

22. Value "__" is Invalid for this Yes/No field -- Indicates that the user has entered something other than "yes" or "no" in a field that

requires one of those responses.

23. Value “__” is Invalid for “Checkbox=X” field – Indicates that the user has entered something other than a check in the checkbox.

24. Point Value Subtotal is INCORRECT -- Indicates that the subtotal on Schedule H1 is incorrect.

25. Schedule H1 contains Redundant Sections – Indicates that the user has entered values under more than one method of allocation.

26. Entity Type [_____] is not an acceptable value -- Indicates that the user has entered a name that is too long to completely appear on the public record.

27. Delimited Name should not exceed 38 letters & spaces – The name field is 38 characters including carat delimiters. (John^Smith^Jr)

28. Name has Too Many Parts (Over 3 Delimiters Found) -- You can only use 3 carats in a name (Smith^John W^ Mr^Jr is good. Mr^John^W^Smith^Jr is bad.).

29. Schedule H3 Expenditure Item(s) don’t match Total(s) – H3 transactions require one line for the admin total and as many lines as necessary for the other expenditure categories. If there are no others, it may be a single line. If the admin amount is zero, the admin line must be included anyway. This is an issue for programmers more than filers.

Error Codes

There is a long list of possible error codes that can be displayed in the validator. Most of these do not apply to FECFile, but are necessary to provide information to other programmers who support electronic filing. To correct an error, go to the transaction indicated by the error message, and make the necessary changes.

The Validator screen indicates if an error is a “Warning” or if it is a “Fail” error. A typical Validation error will appear like this:

Example 1:

Form (Item): SE24 (Johnson^Dave^^)

Field Name: #007 Payee City

Warning Conditionally Required Field is Empty

To understand what information this error is providing us, we begin by looking at the *Form (Item).* This information helps you identify where the problematic transaction is located. In our example, the *Form (Item)* is SE24, which stands for Schedule E Line 24. The name on this particular line item will read Dave Johnson. We need to look for a Schedule E transaction with the name Dave Johnson.

The second step is to look at the *Field Name.* The *Field Name* tells us what part of the transaction is in error. In this case the *Field Name* reads, “Payee City” which tells us that there is an error in the field where the city is entered in for Dave Johnson’s address.

The third step is to look at what the Warning description. In our example, the Warning reads, “Conditionally Required field is empty.” This means we did not fill in the name of the city that Dave Johnson lives in, and we should go back and enter it now.

Example 2:

Form (Item): F3N

Field Name: #0 3 Treasurer's Signature Date

Fail is required but field is empty

First we look at the *Form (Item),* which reads Form 3X. Form 3 refers to our report in its entirety. **Note: This would read Form 3 if we were a Candidate Committee.** Therefore, we know the error is not related to a particular transaction, but to the report itself.

Second, we look at the Field Name, which reads "Treasurer's Signature Date." This refers to the date we "Closed" the report as we prepared to upload it. We reach the "Closed Date" screen, by right clicking on the *Reports View* and selecting *Close.*

Third, we see that we received a "Fail" message and that our description reads, "Is required but field is empty" which tells us we need to go back and enter in the date we closed the report.

The difference between a *Warning* and a ***Fail*** message is that reports containing only warnings may still be uploaded, while a report with a ***Fail*** message cannot be uploaded.

Errors that are *Warning* and those that are ***Fail*** are listed below.

FAIL Error Message

HDR record must be First in File

"Cover" (eg. F3A, F3XN, ...) must be 2nd in File

Filing must be an "FEC" Type of filing

Filing must be in "FEC Version 3.00" format

Amended filing must have an ID of the "Original"

Amended filing must have an "Amendment Number"

Header (HDR) inconsistent with Orig/Amend status

Unrecognized Form Type / Record Ignored

ID# NOT Correct FEC Format

ID# NOT SAME AS Cover Page ID#

Schedule does not belong with Form ____

Report Type is Missing or Invalid

{field} exceeds maximum length of ___

{field) is Required, but field is Empty

Multi-Form Filings are NOT Allowed

Extraneous data follows last field

Schedule H3(s) not Version 2.02 format

Extraneous data coded in a Dummy field

Embedded double-quotes (") not allowed

Leading Blanks {e.g. " TEXT"} not allowed

Bad Date _____not YYYYMMDD format

_____Not a Real Date or Outside 1960-2099

Invalid Amount format:_____

Non-numeric data in Numeric Field

_____ is an Invalid Year (CCYY)

Format Invalid Rate format:_____

Wrong Report Type for this Form

District "__" is not 2-digit Numeric format

Tran ID is NOT UNIQUE - This one is same as other(s)

Back/Cross-Reference to Schedule/Tran ID not valid

Back-Reference TRAN-ID does not match Sched TRAN-ID

Event MUST be identified as [D]irect or [E]xempt

Event MUST be [A]dministrative [D]irect or [E]xempt

Amended Code must be A,C,D,N - not "_"

Only Amended Code "A" allowed on New filings

Warning Messages

Conditionally Required field is Empty

Subtotal {_____} not supported by other lines

Subtotal {_____} not supported by Schedule ___

FYI --> {_____} accumulated on Schedule ___

Election Code invalid: ___ {description}

Election Code missing: ___ {description}

Street Address is Missing

Single-line Address NOT in 1st delimited field

__not a valid 2-character USPS State Code

Zip Code is Invalid or Missing / Zip =_____

Invalid Area Code/Phone Number: _____

Office Code "_" Invalid (Valid Codes: H, S, P)

Comm Code "__" Invalid. (Valid: DM,TP,TM,G)

Comm Target "_" Invalid. (Valid: E, S, M)

Ratio Code "_" Invalid (Valid Codes: N, R, S)

Sup/Opp Code "___" Invalid (Valid Codes: S, O)

Committee Type "_" is Invalid for this form

___ not a valid 3-character Party Code

___ not a valid Party Type (NAT,STA,SUB)

___ Invalid Creditor (ICV,UCV,CAN,EMP,OTH)

_____not a Valid Itemized Transaction

Value "_" is Invalid for this Yes/No field

Value "_" is Invalid for "Checkbox=X" field

Point Value Subtotal is INCORRECT

Schedule H1 contains Redundant Sections

Entity Type [_____] is not an acceptable value

Delimited Name should not exceed 38 letters & spaces

Name has Too Many Parts (Over 3 Delimiters Found)

Schedule H3 Expenditure Item(s) don't match Total(s)